

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY Rumania

REPORT

SUBJECT Current Situation in Rumania: GENERAL
LIVING CONDITIONS; FOREIGN BROADCASTS; IDENTITY SYSTEM;
POSTAL AND MEDICAL PROCEDURES.

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General Conditions

1. Conditions in Rumania have improved somewhat in the past few years. Consumer goods are more plentiful, and food and clothing stores are well stocked. Fear of sudden arrest has diminished and the people feel free to discuss politics more openly. However, the average Rumanian worker earns only enough to provide his family with the barest subsistence, and as a result there is widespread resentment towards the regime. Theft and pilfering have become common practice and, instead of political prisoners, the jails are now filled with people convicted of theft or embezzlement.
2. Between March and June 1955, two major cases of theft were discovered at the Bucharest Municipal Warehouses. Large quantities of timber and metal sheeting material were involved in both cases, and the thefts were accomplished through the cooperation of municipal officials working at the warehouses. These officials provided forged papers on the basis of which the material was openly loaded onto trucks and carried away. Three people were arrested in each case.
3. In March 1955, there was also a scandal in the Supply Division of the Central Union for Cooperatives (Centrocoop). Specifically, this scandal involved the Department for Packing Materials which manages, among other enterprises, three box and barrel factories, one in Bucharest and two in other cities. Timber, which was designated for shipment to these factories, was diverted to certain other Centrocoop enterprises, and from there was funneled onto the black market.

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Postal Procedures

4. Prior to late 1954, it was possible to send private letters abroad from only three specifically designated post office branches in Bucharest. Letters received from abroad were distributed at these same branches, and it was necessary to produce one's identity card upon receiving or posting such a letter. Since late 1954, it has become the practice to post letters abroad from any post office, and letters from abroad are now delivered directly to one's home, together with the other mail. However, presentation of an identity card is still necessary in both cases, as well as when mailing a registered letter. All private mail to and from abroad is believed to be censored.
5. It is virtually impossible to receive, on a private basis, foreign printed matter, including Communist Party newspapers and technical literature. Occasionally, a few Communist newspapers, such as L'Humanite, are released for public sale, and these are sold out very quickly.

Foreign Broadcasts

6. Rumanian radio listeners attempt reception of foreign broadcasts, although effective jamming of the Rumanian language broadcasts beamed from abroad makes reception virtually impossible. On the other hand, however, English, French, and German language broadcasts are received clearly. Radio Free Europe broadcasts are not taken seriously and are generally dismissed as mere propaganda, whereas the BBC is regarded as a reliable source of information. BBC news broadcasts are eagerly received and provide material for widespread discussion.

Identity Cards

7. In 1955, personal identity cards, which had been issued in 1950 for the specific period of five years, expired. During the first quarter of the year, regulations were issued to the effect that holders of identity cards which would expire during this period must report to their District Militia Office for revalidation within ten days after the card had expired. Since no identity cards had been revalidated prior to the issuance of this regulation, holders of identity cards which had expired prior to this time were also instructed to report to their District Militia Office in groups according to alphabetical order.
8. A birth certificate is required in making application for the revalidation of an identity card and, in the case of a married woman, her marriage certificate is required as well. Birth certificates and marriage certificates are issued at the Municipal Registrar's Office (Oficiul Starii Civile). New birth certificates are issued only to those people whose names are already registered with this office. In 1951 in Bucharest, all those people who were not already registered with their Municipal Registrar's Office were instructed to apply for such registration immediately; subsequently, birth certificates which had previously been issued elsewhere were withdrawn, the data on the old certificate was registered, and a new birth certificate was issued to replace the old one. Individuals who did not possess a birth certificate were forced to go through a complicated process of sworn declarations in order to obtain one. Issuance of a new birth certificate usually entails a six month waiting period, unless the certificate is required for the renewal of an identity card, in which case the time lapse is briefer.

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9. Failure to report to the District Militia Office within ten days after the identity card has expired is generally punished with a fine of 25 lei, although a delay of only one or two days would normally evoke merely a reprimand. Defacement of the identity card is also punished by a fine of 25 lei. Loss of an identity card is punished much more severely and a new card is issued only after a waiting period of six months.
10. Each individual must have his identity card with him at all times; however, no police checks are known to have taken place recently. Anyone caught without his identity card during a routine police check would be arrested immediately and would be held until someone produced his card.

Medical Procedures

11. Upon visiting a medical clinic, a patient must produce his identity card to verify his address. If his address does not fall within the zone of responsibility for that particular medical station, the patient is not accepted for treatment. There is a special medical clinic in Bucharest for visitors to the city. If a patient is too ill to report in person to a clinic, he may summon a physician by phone. Generally, however, the physician will not visit the patient that same day.
12. It is not unusual to make a private visit to a physician. Doctors serving at the clinics must work according to established norms, and as a result do not have sufficient time to conduct proper examinations at the clinic. For a proper examination, therefore, a patient must either visit a doctor privately (every physician may receive patients after regular working hours and there are still some doctors who have X-ray and other medical equipment in their own homes), or else the patient must pay the doctor at the clinic out of his own pocket. However, such payment is not made openly. If the doctor knows the patient personally, he might accept the money, but more often than not the entire matter is arranged through another doctor, who sends his "dear colleague" a note asking him to "please examine this patient thoroughly."

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